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THE EARLY HISTORY OF CLUBS.

In his great Dictionary, Dr Johnson defines the word Club as 'an assembly of good fellows meeting under certain conditions,' and proceeds to illustrate his meaning by a sentence from Dryden: 'What right has any man to meet in factious clubs to vilify the government?' Though such a definition was no doubt sufficient in the day in which it was written, it is to-day utterly inadequate to include the vast series of organisations known as Clubs. Of the people in whose daily life a club plays an important part, it may be safely asserted that not one in a hundred has any idea of the origin and early history of the institutions with which he is so familiar. Clubs seem so essentially modern, so much a part of our everyday lives, that we are apt to forget that they have any history at all. We are proverbially ignorant of common things, and though industrious people have written volumes on such matters, they do not seem to have been very successful in putting an end to the prevailing gloom. The history of clubs is a subject of considerable interest, taking us back to the classic days of Greece and Rome, and thence to the days of Queen Elizabeth, reminding us that, after all, there is nothing new under the sun.

It is to Greece that we must look for the first page of the story. Of course, the old Athenian clubs were not in all respects similar to those of modern London; but there was nevertheless between them a strong affinity, for Aristotle tells us that men of the same trade and members of a particular tribe were wont to club together for business purposes. He goes on to say that others combined for the sake of social intercourse, and adds that 'these meet together for the sake of one another's company and to offer sacrifices; when they meet, they both pay certain honours to the gods, and at the same time take pleasures and relaxation among themselves.'

In Rome, the earliest clubs were the trade guilds founded by Numa, similar to the guilds of craftsmen which play so important a part in the

art history of the middle ages. At one time, there were eighty of these guilds in Rome alone, and they were not confined to the metropolis, for the boatmen of the Seine at Paris and the boatmen of the lower Rhone formed clubs of their own. Very closely allied to the masonic lodges of our day were the secret societies formed throughout the Roman Empire for the practice of religious rites unknown to the State. An idea of the extent of club-life in Rome may be obtained from the fact that even the slaves attached to the great houses of the city formed clubs of their own. In the house of Augustus there would seem to have been several clubs of this kind, for his *chef de cuisine* left a sum of money for the benefit of the club of cooks, of which he was a member.

The history of the purely social clubs of the Roman Empire is incomplete. They were formed chiefly by Romans employed in the more distant parts of the empire, in order to lessen the feeling of isolation which their exile involved. Notwithstanding that military clubs were prohibited by the State, they were tolerated amongst the officers of regiments employed in foreign service, as a compensation for the social disadvantages entailed in a long residence abroad. The rules of a club of officers of a regiment on service in Africa have been discovered on the site of a Roman encampment. They are engraved on two stone pillars, which stood in a conspicuous position near the residence of the commander. The contribution to such a club was about twenty-five pounds, two-thirds of which were returned to his representatives on the death of the member, or to himself on his retirement from the service. The expenses of the funeral of a deceased member were paid by his club, or he might claim a portion of his contribution to enable him to travel in foreign countries. If he made use of this privilege, the liability of the club to bury him was at an end.

Another form of the social club was the ladies' club. Although we are accustomed to look upon ladies' clubs as institutions especially characteristic of our own times, they are in fact far older than English civilisation itself. The ladies' clubs of

Rome were very numerous, and met for religious as well as for social purposes. The most distinguished of them was known popularly as the 'Senate of Matrons.' Its title was derived from an imperial edict. Attached to it was a debating society in which momentous questions of etiquette and dress were discussed with becoming gravity. Sometimes the fair women so far condescended as to interfere in municipal questions, and when a man who was so fortunate as to gain their goodwill died, the ladies erected a statue of their hero.

Political clubs were common to both Greece and Rome. Mr Grote has shown that the Athenian aristocrats on the one hand, and democrats on the other, advanced their principles by means of political clubs in much the same way as is done throughout Great Britain to-day. A select company of the young men of Greece, inspired by the teachings of the voluptuous epicurean Aristippus, formed themselves into a club, to which they gave the gloomy and significant title of 'Those about to die together.' A weird description of the banqueting-hall of these eccentric individuals remains: 'Over some flasks of the red Chian wine, within the walls of a noble hall, in a dim city we sat, at night, a company of seven. And to our chamber there was no entrance save by a lofty door of brass; and the door was fashioned by the artisan Corinnos, and, being of rare workmanship, was fastened from within. Black draperies likewise, in the gloomy room, shut out from our view the moon, the lurid stars, and the peopleless streets; but the boding and the memory of evil, they would not be so excluded.' Although there were clubs in these classic lands, generally speaking, there were no club-houses. Buildings of this kind were indeed not so necessary in Greece and Italy, where men could meet in the shade of a temple or at the baths, as in England, where the climate is unfavourable to open-air lounging.

To pass from Greece and Italy before Christ to England in the reign of Henry IV. is a long step. Clubs seem to have become extinct in the interval which divides these distant periods, for the secret societies of the middle ages were hardly clubs, even using the word in its broadest sense. They were rather associations formed to hand down from age to age some secret, and the social idea was altogether absent from them. The first definite information we have of using an English club is given to us by Thomas Ocleve, the poet, who was born about 1370. This early club was called 'La Court de bone Compagnie,' and it is probable that it included among its members Chaucer and Ocleve himself. Ocleve sent to one Henry Somer a metrical notice of a kind of club dinner at which he was to occupy the chair:

For the dyner arraye
Ageyn Thirsday next and nat is delaye.

There is besides in existence a remonstrance from Somer at the social excesses of which some of the members would seem to have been guilty.

Although clubs were revived thus early, the word club did not then exist. It is from an Anglo-Saxon verb *clofan*, meaning to divide expenses; but the first time the word is used by an English writer is in 1659, when Aubrey the antiquary writes: 'We now use the word Clubbe for

a sodality held in a tavern.' The same author mentions a ballot-box: 'Here we had (very formally) a balloting box, and balloted how things should be carried.' During the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., a large number of clubs arose, some of which have become famous, owing to the great men who were members of them. First among these was the brilliant society which met at the Mermaid Tavern, of which Shakespeare and Ben Jonson were members. Its doings are described in a letter from Beaumont to Ben Jonson:

What things we have seen
Done at the 'Mermaid!' Heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtle flame,
As if every one from whom they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life.

The meetings at the Mermaid have always been an attractive subject for poets. Browning has written of them; and there are the lines of Keats:

Souls of poets dead and gone,
What elysium have ye known—
Happy field or mossy cavern—
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

An earlier club than the Mermaid was the 'Apollo Club,' almost the first of its kind. It met at the tavern with the sign of the 'Devil,' in Fleet Street, and was presided over by Ben Jonson himself, who, in his *Marmion*, makes Careless say he has 'come from Apollo':

From the heaven
Of my delight, where the boon Delphic god
Drinks sack, and keeps his bacchanalia,
And has his altars and his incense smoking,
And speaks in sparkling prophecies.

During the Commonwealth arose the famous 'Rota Club,' which was formed for the propagation of republican opinions. It numbered amongst its members the most illustrious literary men of the time. There were Milton, Harrington (the author of *Oceano*), Andrew Marvell, Cyriac Skinner, and Nevill. Cecil Hay, in his work on Modern Club-life, mentions the Rota as represented now by 'those compromises between public-houses and debating societies known by the name of Discussion Halls or Forums, of which a certain establishment yclept "Cogers' Hall," in Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, may be mentioned as a specimen.' Alas, the Cogers' Hall is no more! The 'Sealed Knot' was the opposition club to the Rota. All its members were Royalists, and organised in favour of the exiled Charles a general insurrection which never took place.

From this time the decay of the old tavern clubs set in. Gradually clubs began to conceive the idea of having buildings of their own, and the old inns were deserted. A Club-house was founded in Pall-Mall in the reign of George III., and became the forerunner of that great series of club palaces which leads to not a few of the streets of London whatever magnificence they can boast. Some of the clubs still existing link the new era of club-life with the old. The Cocoa-tree Club—of which Defoe wrote, 'A Whig will no more go to the Cocoa-tree than a Tory will be seen at the Coffee-house of St James's'—has its house in St James's Street; and White's Club, founded nearly two centuries ago, is still popular.

One can well imagine how great would be the astonishment of the original members of one of these old institutions if they could see the changes which have been wrought in the places in which they must have passed many happy hours, and for which they could hardly fail to feel some affection.

A SOLDIER AND A GENTLEMAN.*

CHAPTER XV.—THE END.

MEANWHILE, Ferrers' destiny hung in the balance in the library of Dawlish Place, and there is small doubt but that the scale in which were his qualities and pretensions would have kicked the beam had it not been for Lord Debrett. Mr Drumly stood his friend, as he had promised, but his friendship would have availed little against the steadfast opposition of Mr Drew. Drew was the senior partner and trustee, and he made the most of his position. Moreover, he was a hard-headed man of business and of the world, who, notwithstanding his manner of genial good-fellowship, had no great softness of heart; and, being a married man of many years' standing, he had a suspicion of sentimental love affairs. In winning this difficult and obstinate person to a favourable view of his comrade, Lord Debrett showed a shrewdness and a worldly wisdom which excited Mr Drumly's admiration.

'No,' said Drew; 'I can't see how we can conscientiously entertain the idea at all. Indeed, frankly, I may say it appears to me an impudent and preposterous pretension. You are aware, of course, Lord Debrett, that Miss Dawlish is her father's sole heir, and that—that, in short, she ought to look very high indeed for a husband.'

'No doubt, Mr Drew,' said Debrett. 'But if Miss Dawlish—as Mr Drumly assures you—wishes to look no higher than my friend?'

'Oh, she's an inexperienced girl, and she'll grow out of that.'

'She has her father's temper, remember,' said Drumly, 'and he was high-spirited and self-willed, as you know, Drew. Besides, you mustn't forget that though he desired a certain marriage for her, he insisted to us that there must be nothing like coercion.'

'Coercion? Who wants coercion, Drumly? I only want the girl to wait—till she really knows her own mind.'

'Certainly, Mr Drew,' said Debrett; "'Wait' is the word; there's no immediate hurry. I only ask you to give my friend a chance—a sufficient chance. And let me say this; look as high as you like, you won't find a better fellow, all round, than Ferrers. You will admit, Mr Drew, that I know something of Society?'

'Certainly,' said Mr Drew.

'Well, I prefer Ferrers for a friend to any man I know. I have known him for twelve years—I have seen him under all sorts of circumstances, in barracks, on the march, and in battle in the Soudan, and at home with my own people (he has often stayed with me). He is a staunch comrade—and a staunch comrade can't miss being a good husband—he's got all his wits about him'—

'And he has the finest health,' put in Drumly.

'Yes,' said Debrett; 'sound as a bell, and as hard as nails.'

'Oh,' said Drew, 'I've nothing to say against him as a man.'

'There is nothing against him,' said Debrett, 'but this affair, and that, as you've heard, he was led into. It was a pity; it was wrong; but he has come out of it as well as any man could.'

'Yes,' admitted Drew, 'all things considered I think he has. But you see the thing is he has neither property nor prospect, and, of course—well, he is not what we call a gentleman.'

'That depends,' said Debrett, 'on what you mean by a gentleman. If you should happen to mean a man that would never do anything mean and that always keeps his head, and that can reckon back his people as having been of the same sort for hundreds of years, then George Ferrers is a better gentleman than I am. And as to property—well, he's not rich, and his people are not rich; but they have owned and cultivated the same land since the old days of fighting between England and Scotland.'

'Then,' said Drew, with a final burst of petulance, 'why doesn't he go home and inherit his father's farm and not come here asking for heiresses?'

'No, no,' said Drumly, 'do him justice, Drew; he has not asked for anything; it's we are asking on his behalf.'

'Then about prospects,' said Debrett, keeping to the subject—'there, Mr Drew, you might help him.'

'Me?' exclaimed Drew.

'You might offer him,' said Debrett, 'a place in your bank: he can tot up figures like one o'clock.'

Drew stared from Debrett to Drumly, and Drumly laughed 'Ho, ho!' in the depth of his beard.

'I'll be responsible for him,' said Debrett, 'to any amount.'

'My dear Lord Debrett,' said Drumly, 'you don't quite understand my partner's astonishment. Banking is something like soldiering: you must be put to it, or take to it, pretty young to make anything of it. No; I think the prospect for your friend is to look after an estate, because he understands farming.'

'Yes,' said Debrett, 'I suppose that's better.'

'I daresay,' said Drew lightly, as if it were no concern of his, 'he might get a situation of that sort.'

'I hope he will,' said Drumly: 'and I have a definite proposal to make, Drew, to that end. We can't let Sir William's mortgage be foreclosed: we agree on that. We must take it up. But we can't leave Sir William in charge of the estate. Suppose we put Mr Ferrers in charge, and see if he can make it pay?'

That looked merely like business; and Drew, after pulling his whisker a moment, said: 'I have no objection. Very well now; I agree to our taking up the mortgage, pensioning Sir William off for the sake of his brother, and putting Mr Ferrers in charge of the estate, on condition that I hear no more of his marrying Miss Dawlish.'

'You shall hear no more at present,' said

Drumly: 'there is plenty for him to do before he thinks of marrying.'

'Let me only ask this of you, Mr Drew,' said the wily Debrett: 'permit me and my friend Ferrers to visit your house.' Debrett, of course, reckoned that if his friend were admitted to Drew's house, he could hardly be forbidden to speak to Miss Dawlish, who lived there.

'Always be delighted to see you, my lord,' said Drew, 'and I can't in common courtesy refuse to see your friend.'

It was impossible to insist further; and Lord Debrett was withdrawing somewhat disappointed with the result of his efforts on Ferrers' behalf, when Mr Drumly took his arm and drew him aside, and said: 'Don't be impatient; we'll conquer Drew. He thinks he's as sharp as steel, but he isn't; he thinks he can see round a corner, but he can't. I believe in your friend; he'll come out all right; and I'm going to make him my heir to-morrow.'

It is not surprising that next morning before breakfast (the party was to break up immediately after) Drumly should have got out the pony-chaise, and, accompanied by Dolly and Debrett—of course, quite without pre-arrangement—should have driven down the avenue and out by the great gate towards the little inn on the edge of the common. Nor is it surprising that before they had been well on the road they should have encountered Ferrers, who looked very shame-faced. Like an honest man, he attempted no limping excuse of his being found where he was; and Drumly, leaving Debrett and Dolly to drive on a little together, walked along the grassy margin of the road with his arm in that of Ferrers, and told him all the news of the night before. The proposal that he should take charge of the estate Ferrers unhesitatingly accepted, inwardly resolving that at any cost he would be found equal to the confidence placed in him.

'It is awfully good of you,' said he to Mr Drumly, 'to take so much trouble for a man about whom you know next to nothing.'

'You see,' said Drumly, with a grim smile, 'I have the misfortune to like the man and believe in him, and so has Lord Debrett. You have really to thank him more than me for winning Drew over to this arrangement. And this done, it depends on yourself, my son—perhaps a little on your good friend Debrett—how all the rest follows.'

They then met Lord Debrett and Dolly driving back. There were no lingering adieus; for they were all likely to meet in London next day or the day after. Ferrers' heart was full: what had he done to deserve all this kindness?

'I have to thank you,' said he, gripping Lord Debrett's hand.

'Oh, it's all right, old chap,' said Debrett. 'See you in town to-morrow.'

'Good-bye,' said Dolly and he together: their hands and their eyes met, and that was all.

So they parted for a little while. They drove back to Dawlish Place, and he stood looking after them till the turn of the road hid them from sight, and then he returned to the little inn, whence in an hour or two he departed for London.

There are but these facts further to record:

Ferrers won more and more the favour of the business-like Drew; within a year he had brought the administration of the estate and the Home Farm to a surprising pitch of order and economy; in little more than the year he was overwhelmed by the receipt from Drumly of the title-deeds of the estate—Drumly had bought the estate, and the one condition he attached to his gift to Ferrers was that the young man should take the name of Dawlish, so that his late partner's desire might be fulfilled that the Dawlish name and the Dawlish land should keep together; and within eighteen months it was announced in the newspapers that 'George Ferrers Dawlish, of Dawlish Place,' had married 'Dorothy (Dolly) Dawlish, only child of the late Robert Dawlish, Esquire, of the City of London.'

STRANGE DISEASES AND STRANGE REMEDIES.

SUPERSTITION is still rife in Ireland to an almost incredible extent. It is almost a religion with the lower orders; it is indeed part of their religion, being composed largely of an unwavering faith in the power of prayer to heal diseases; but not in prayer alone—here comes in the superstitions element, which requires that prayer should be aided by the use of some charm more or less absurd. These charms, they believe, are hereditary, descending from father to daughter, or from mother to son, but never to the same sex. Where they suppose they were originally procured, we have never been able to find out; but imagine, from the mysterious and reluctant air with which they answer such inquiries, that they fully believe that the charms were in the first instance a Divine gift.

It is strange to observe how surely an element of the ridiculous pervades all Irish observances. In their sorrows, their joys, even their religion, a shade of the grotesque is sure to be found; and that 'heritage of woe,' the bodily sufferings of poor humanity, are turned almost into a farce, when they describe them from their own point of view, their ideas of cause and effect being of the most primitive kind. It is not very long since I went to visit a very poor woman who had been for some time in delicate health. I was surprised to find her standing at a table making some oatmeal bread.

She answered my greetings by saying: 'Deed, thin, your honour, ye find me doin' what I couldn't do this many a long day. I didn't shtand at that table to make bread for six months till to-day.'

In replying, I rashly concluded that in some of her frequent visits to the dispensary she had at last procured a bottle from the doctor which had done her good.

She sniffed disdainfully. 'The docthor is it. Ah, the docthor never done me a ha'porth o' good. I quit takin' his medicines entirely. It was a while ago; I was that bad in me hart that I thought I'd do no good at all, at all. It'ud be here, it'ud be there within in me. I never knew where it'ud be; but it wasn't in the right place at all. Well, ma'am, I heerd there was an ould woman beyant at Cruxty that had a charrum for the like o' that, an' done great cures. "Wid the help o' God,"

says I, "I'll go into the town on Monda' to the market, an' maybe I'll meet wid her there." It was long since I shtood in the market indeed; an' whin I got in, I was fairly *bet up* wid the inward pain. Well, I met the ould woman, an' axed her would she do the charrum for me. "Throth, I will, acushla," says she, "wid a heart an' a half; but it's only ov a Thursda' I can do it; so, av ye'll come to me next Thursda', I'll be ready for ye, an' wid the help o' God, ye'll be cured." "Oh wirra, wirra!" says I; "I couldn't go next Thursda', for Mick has to go to the fair at Bally-James-Duff wid the pigs, an' he'll want the cart; an' if I have to wait till the Thursda' after, it's dead an' buried I'll be." Well, whin she seen the shtate I was in, an' how bad I looked, she studied a while, and thin says she: "Well, we'll see what we can do, an' maybe, wid the help o' God, it'll come out right. On next Thursda' at twelve o'clock be thinkin' o' me," says she; "be thinkin' o' nothin' else but me, an' I'll say the prayer for ye, an' maybe it's what it'll save ye, as ye can't come. But ye'll have to come the next Thursda', for it must be done three times."—Well, your honour, I woke this mornin' [this *was* Thursda'] as wake an' donny as ever, an' at twelve o'clock I began to think o' the ould woman at Cruxty. I bethought an' I bethought of her long enough, an' after a while, "Biddens," says I, "wipe that table an' put the male on it an' bring in a sup o' wather."—"Oh mamma," says she, "you're not going to make bread, are ye, an' you not able to shtand?" "Do what you're tould, child," says I, "an' lave me alone." Well, wid that I got up an' went to the table where your honour found me, an' med the bread, an' sorra a ha'porth on me the worse. I'm thinkin' the charrum's workin', an' next Thursda' I'll go to her meself.

I left the cottage musing over what she had told me, and much interested in this new faith-cure; and the following week went to see her again to hear how the charm progressed. She had been to Cruxty, and had seen her old woman. All that occurred there was that the old woman had taken both her hands in hers and repeated a mysterious form of words over three times. What the words were, no one knew but the old woman herself, who received the formula from her dying father, and had them written out to be sent to her son in America, on her own death. But they are believed to be a prayer.

My friend did not look very much better; but she said the charm was working; but as it took as long to cure you as you were ill before you tried it, it would be long before she could expect to be quite well.

As I spent that summer away from home, some months elapsed before I saw her again. Soon after my return in the autumn I looked in one evening to see how the charm was progressing. I found her as usual seated by the fire on a low stool, leaning against a sack of chaff. The 'childhre' were all out, and her only companions were some hens pecking about the floor. Of course my first inquiry was for her health.

"Deed, thin, your honour, I'm donny enough; but I'm bethther nor I was; an' wid the help o' God, I'll be gaily in short."

"Has the old woman's charm not cured you yet, then?"

"Is it th' ould woman's charrum? Ah! sure that done me no good. I'm thryin' another wan now. Maybe it wasn't the right cure for me. Anyway, I wasn't gettin bethther, an' I heerd ov a man up at Ballynagrancy has a grand charrum; an' ye needn't go to him yerself naither, for it's all done be manes ov an egg."

"An egg!"

"Yes, your honour; an' I'll tell you all about it. I sent Briny to him wid the egg last week; an' where did he find the man but out rapin' in the field. So he threw down the rapin'-hook. "Come an," says he to Briny; "come over to the hedge there.—Now, gossoon," says he, "tell me is it the *hartache* your mother has?"—"Sure, I dunno," says the gossoon.—"Well, gim me the egg," says the man; "the *hartache* is the only thing I have a cure for, an' I'll know soon enough if that's what it is, whin I take the egg in me hand."—Well, ma'am, he tuk the egg from Briny, an' shut his hand on it, an' began to say the prayer. Well, your honour, if it wasn't the *hartache* I had he wouldn't be able to say wan word o' the prayer! But it's the *hartache* I have, sure enough; for he said the prayer all through; an' then he gev the egg back to Briny, an', savin your presence, ma'am, the egg all shweated in his hand.—"Now, Briny," says he, "take that egg back to your mother an' tell her to boil it on the fire; but nothin' must come betune her an' the fire while it's boilin'; an' when it's boiled, she must take it off the fire an' open it; then she must throw the first spoonful athrough the house an' ait the rest ov it. An' she must ait three eggs like that in three weeks; an' plaze God, she'll be cured ov the *hartache*."

"And did you follow all his directions?"

"Throth I did, your honour. I'm after aitin' the second egg yestherda', an' I think the charrum is workin' well in me. This mornin', when I woke first, I felt terrible bad. I couldn't scarce breathe, an' I sat up in the bed to thry to get aise. Well, ma'am, when I sat up, me hart gave a great lep an' fell down into me ribs; it shtayed there a while, an' then it gev another lep an' got round into me back. Well, it played away a while in the small o' me back, an' then it crep' round in under me arrum an' fell back into its right place. So that's what the charrum done for me, ma'am; an' plaze God, now me hart is in its right place, I'll soon be cured all out."

Poor old woman! her belief in charm and charm-worker was unbounded, and we knew not whether to admire most her amazing credulity or extraordinary ideas of anatomy.

But credulity and superstition are not confined to the lower classes alone. I think a story told me as an actual fact by an educated lady, the daughter and sister of a clergyman, might very well be classed with our poorer friend's as an instance of both. We were discussing the subject of charms, and I was surprised to see that she believed in them herself, as did also her reverend brother.

"I cannot doubt what I know to be true myself," she said; and told us the following tale, which I give in her own words.

"There was a man in our village, a respectable shopkeeper, who was afflicted with an enormous tumour in his cheek. I well remember the feelings of awe and curiosity with which I used

to inspect his profile in church when I was a child. He sat a few pews in front of us, and I could not resist the temptation of watching him all through the service, and looking for the grotesque effects of his enormously exaggerated cheek. His infirmity seemed to increase with years, and the poor man was a frightful object. One day not long ago I passed a man in the village street whose face I seemed to know, and yet I could not think of his name. It suddenly dawned upon me it was Mr — without his swollen cheek! I could hardly believe my senses, and followed him into a shop on purpose to see if it really could be the man I had seen only the Sunday before, so marvellously changed in such a short time. Yes, it certainly was Mr —. He addressed me first, saying: "I suppose you hardly recognise me;" and he then told me how he was cured. It was by a charm! He was advised to go out the first night the new moon was visible, and after saying, "In the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," to wave a dinner plate round his head nine times towards the new moon. He did so; and in the morning his tumour had completely disappeared!

Such was the tale told to me and implicitly believed in by an educated Irish lady.

The lower orders of Irish are as a rule rather hypochondriacal, and they are fond of trying peculiar remedies for their ailments. A favourite poultice for wounds is a paraffin candle scraped and some cabbage, all boiled together. A simple but rather unpleasant remedy for a cut leg was recommended to an old man—it was to sit with his leg in a boghole all night. This he tried with perfect success. His leg got quite well; but as he died of bronchitis a few days afterwards, he did not long enjoy his 'perfect cure.'

A carpenter who in chopping wood had cut a slice off his shinbone with the hatchet, first applied a poultice of nettles and salt. This not healing it immediately, he put on a bandage soaked in Venice turpentine. As the wound remained obstinate, and even got worse under his gentle treatment, he determined to be firm with it, and show it he would stand no more nonsense, so he burned it with blue-stone! He did not lose the leg; but it did not recover until less heroic remedies were used.

A poor man suffering from inflammation of the eye caused by a thorn, had blue-stone blown in. He *did* lose the eye.

If they have peculiar cures, they have also most peculiar diseases. A respectable coachman complained of illness, and described his symptoms thus: 'A creepin' an' a crawlin' in the furnace of his head, a bingin' an' a bangin' in his brow, an' a dazzlin' in his eyes.' It must be a terrible complaint!

A favourite remedy for every kind of internal pain is hot vinegar punch; indeed, vinegar taken either cold or hot is considered almost a specific for everything. It must be comforting in some cases! It is much used for a 'squeezin' on the hart,' which is the commonest complaint of all.

They are a kindly and sympathetic race, always ready to help each other in cases of sickness, either with nursing or good advice; but I fear in most cases the remedies prescribed are far worse than the disease.

A village tragedy occurred in my own know-

ledge. A young blacksmith whose wife had presented him with their first baby was much horrified to find that the infant had been born with teeth. So unusual an event must be unlucky; so the poor baby's teeth were drawn by the unskilled hand of the blacksmith. The baby died; and the mother, shocked and grieved by the scene, died soon afterwards. 'But sure, he'd never have had luck or grace if them unlucky teeth hadn't been drew.'

Of course their terror of a dog's bite is unbounded, and they have many superstitions about the danger of it and the best means of averting hydrophobia. A pet dachshund being seized with a sudden and unaccountable desire to taste human flesh, tried a bit from the leg of a boy passing by. The boy took it good-humouredly, and did not seem unduly alarmed, only begging the dog's mistress to give him 'a few ribs of the dog's hair' to dress the wound with. This is the commonest idea of a safeguard, and a very expensive one.

I could add many more to the list of 'strange diseases and strange remedies;' but think I have given enough instances to show the extreme ignorance and extreme credulity of the Irish. Both very ridiculous, perhaps; and yet it is touching, amid all its absurdity, to see the simplicity and trustfulness of these poor people, so humbly submissive to the 'will of God,' in which they acquiesce so patiently in sickness and sorrow; so ready to 'believe all things,' a command they most literally obey, and which is so impossible to the more educated and sophisticated class. They are, in fact, like unruly children—troublesome, warm-hearted, easily led by those they love and trust; and if fierce passions smoulder under a light-hearted exterior, ready to be kindled at a touch; yet for everyday life, 'Paddy at home' is a delightful companion; gay, sympathetic, with an inexhaustible fund of humour; above all things, fervently religious, and with capabilities of faith almost sufficient to 'remove mountains.'

A SCRATCH IN PLAY.

PART I.

Beware, my friends, of fiends and their grimaces.

Of little angels' wiles yet more beware thee.

Just such a one to kiss her did ensnare me,

But coming, I got wounds, and not embraces.

Beware of old black cats with evil faces;

Yet more of kittens white and soft be wary.

My sweetheart was just such a little fairy,

And yet she well-nigh scratched my heart to pieces.

O child! O sweet love! dear beyond all measure,

How could those eyes so bright and clear deceive me?

That little paw so sore a heart-wound give me?

My kitten's tender paw, thou soft, small treasure,

Oh! could I to my burning lips but press thee,

My heart the while might bleed to death and bless thee.

I AM very sorry to have to say it, yet I must speak the truth even of her I love most; and I repeat, what I always have maintained, not only that she was completely in the wrong, but that she ought to confess it.

We had loved each other all our lives. Our fathers were old brother-officers and the closest of friends; and each being widowed and the father of an only child, what was more natural than that when they left the service and her father settled on his estate, my father should

take up his quarters in a pretty cottage on his friend's domains? What plans the two old fellows used to make for their children's future! I, of course, should enter the old regiment; and she, of course, should marry me. Alas! I myself was the cause of the shattering of the first dream; and subsequent events very nearly put an end to all chance of the second's being realised.

When I had reached the age of seventeen, when my brain ought to have been on fire for the sound of the drum, and my sleep disturbed by dreams of the glories of war, my dear old father discovered—through an intolerable odour which pervaded the house, and was traced to a mysterious box in my bedroom—that my mind turned towards science, and that a macerating pot or the dissecting table was more to me than the extermination of the entire British army. I often sigh now as I think of the sad head-shakings the poor old gentlemen must have indulged in as they discussed my extraordinary fancy over their wine; and I know that my little playfellow, Avis, treated me to a good deal of contempt when it was confessed that I actually turned from 'the only profession suitable for a gentleman,' and deliberately chose that of a mere sawbones.

Poor old father! He loved me too well to oppose me; and one dull autumn morning I left the old home to enter upon my studies at the university of Edinburgh. Why did I go to Edinburgh, and not London? Well, I think it was partly because I had a feeling that I was breaking with all the old life; and therefore wanted to put hundreds of miles between me and the old home, as I had put hundreds of difficulties between my father and the realisation of his old hope.

How well I remember my arrival, that cold, gray morning, in the beautiful city! I left my luggage at the station, and climbed up the steep hill that leads from the land of steam, and noise to the most beautiful street I have yet seen in my wanderings. How grandly, away to my left, rose the magnificent 'Old Town,' topped with its castle; and to my right, the gardens and splendid buildings of Princes Street; while behind me couched the 'Lion,' watching over the safety of the maiden city! How lonely I felt among it all—how utterly lost! I think that, if all had approved my design to become a doctor, I should at that moment have turned and gone back to England, and promised my old father to do anything he might wish. But the vision of a child with long flowing hair, defiant face, and hands fast clasped behind her, came across my mental vision. She had refused to bid me good-bye. How she would triumph if I came home again, my work undone! No! I must go on. So I plucked up heart, and wandered on alone in that unknown city, looking for a place wherein to lay my weary head. Before long, I found lodgings, and had my things removed to a little street near the theatre. And not many weeks had passed before I was as happy as a king, drinking in all the new mysteries of my chosen profession. Ah! that first enthusiasm, why doesn't it last? Why, as the years go on, does there come in its stead such utter loathing of each fresh step? I did not in the least mind the dissecting room; but the operating

theatre—the hospital—the horror of it all! Well, it is over; and to that supercilious little figure with the flying hair and the clenched hands do I owe the obstinacy that carried me through these four years of sunshine and shadow. Give in, when she had said: 'I know you will hate it. I hope you will give it up!' Shall I give it up? Never! The thought of the look of triumph I should see in the eyes of that young girl acted as a spur to me.

I worked on. I hardly ever went home; for I was really 'keen on' my work, and spent most of my spare time among the foreign hospitals and schools. Then a serious illness, coming upon me just as I had completed my course, made me decide, on my recovery, to go as doctor on board a great ship sailing to the other ends of the earth. So, thanks to one thing and another, it was not till the slim, awkward boy of eighteen had changed into a great weather-beaten man of four or five and twenty, that I once more stood on the old walled terrace of the home of my little love. And by my side was the little love herself! And *such* a little love! At twenty she was no bigger than she had been at fifteen; but oh! so much prettier. The hair that had then been often dragged back into a stiff pigtail now wandered in wondrous waves over her little head, poised like a flower on her sweet neck. No more ink-bespattered pinafores and scratched hands; no more long thin spindle-shanks showing under a short and skimpy skirt! No; she was as dainty as a fairy, and took now as much pains to adorn her already perfect little self as at one time she had seemed to expend on trying to personate a scarecrow. Yes; I stood by her once again, and knew that I was likely to be near her for the rest of our lives. For my dear father was getting old, and longed to have his only son beside him. So I was only too delighted when the offer came of a practice in the neighbourhood. Yes, I had come home 'to live and die,' as my aged nurse cheerfully put it, in the home of my childhood; and I could hardly believe I was not a child again, as once more I settled into the well-known routine: dined with the two old gentlemen; strolled out as of old on the terrace with my early playmate; climbed at night once more to the familiar room under the thatch; and listened as in years gone by to the murmur of the stream that ran from her home to mine. Yes, it was all the same! The old women seemed not a day older; the trees very little bigger; the river just as it had always been. Only, how different it all was: how different the thoughts that thrilled through my brain—the feelings that throbbed in my heart!

Well, well, we need not go over all that strange, miserable, happy time when my mind was filled with doubt and fear; when I knew not whether I was to be the most blessed or the most wretched of men; whether I was to stay contentedly at home for the rest of my life, or start once more on my travels to heal a broken heart as best I could among foreign lands and unknown faces. I sometimes fancy that if we could but turn back the 'forward-flowing tide of time,' I would live these weeks over again.

But at length they came to an end. One still June evening, when the moon was but a crescent in the sky, and the nightingales were singing

with all the strength of their tiny throats and fervour of their great hearts, my little love laid her golden head somewhere about the lower edge of my breast-pocket, and gazing up in my face, promised to overlook the fact that I was only a sawbones and no gallant officer.

'Well, you see,' whispered the little voice, 'you are so big and strong and handsome, it is no use trying to fight against you. I love you, I love you! and after all, you are my own dear old Clinton; and I'd marry you if you were a sweep, which is even worse than a doctor.' And the brave blue eyes looked up at me so proudly and so trustingly, that I thought no man had ever before such loving glances cast upon him.

Oh, what a happy time we had! I thought that trouble could never touch me more. As I strode home through the soft air to tell my father the glad news, I felt like an archangel.

Yes, I fancied my troubles were at an end—that I was going to be blessed beyond all human flesh; but I did not yet realise what it is to be an engaged man! No sooner were we safely and firmly betrothed, than my young lady contracted such a habit of flirting as made me stand agape. I maintain that she flirted. *She* insists that she did not! She says she was only making herself agreeable for the sake of my practice. She repeats that she smiled on the curates, youths from Oxford, retired military men, &c., not as men at all, but purely as possible future patients. Future patients! Did I want them bought with her smiles? Still, such an injured saint did she look when I ventured to expostulate, that I hardly knew how to bear myself; and I used to wonder whether I really was the most suspicious brute on the face of the green earth.

At length matters reached a climax, and I turned at last.

It was in the week of the 'Lawn Tennis Tournament'—the one great excitement of our little country-side—when a young hussar made his appearance, and contrived to get himself drawn as her partner in the doubles! *She* declares I am simply talking nonsense when I assert that he got himself drawn as her partner; and she says that it is all done by lots, and that people must play with just whoever falls to their lot! Well, that is neither here nor there. She need not have behaved as she did. He did not live in these parts of the world: he could not be considered as a possible patient; yet the interest she took in him was most marked. If it is a fact that she could not help having him for her partner in the 'doubles'—as they call the thing—need she have stood watching him with all her eyes in the 'singles,' clapping her hands at each stroke he won, or have been the first to congratulate him the moment he had put on his abominable loud 'blazer' and marched off the field, or court, victorious?

I do not play tennis, having more important matters to attend to; nor do I dance particularly well; still, at their insufferably dull 'Tennis Ball,' she need not have thrown me over for him in the pronounced way she chose to do.

'Oh, Clinton, may I give Captain Smyth one of your dances? You won't mind, will you?'

'Oh, certainly not; give him the lot, if you like,' I answered blandly.

I did not know till that moment that the sweetest of blue eyes can flash sparks of ice; but I saw them do it then.

'Oh, thank you so much.—There, Captain Smyth; that is delightful: you can have three more than I promised you at first.'

And without waiting to listen to my angry expostulation, she sailed away on his arm. I knew I had been rude, and wanted to apologise; and tried hard to catch her eye as she swam round with the handsome captain, who *could* dance. But never once were the long dark lashes lifted, never once did the old smile play across the sweet little face.

I went home utterly wretched. Ah, how the little paw could wound my big stupid heart! I lay awake nearly all night, and during the long hours I made up my mind to hasten, the very first thing in the morning, to 'make friends' with her. I should tell her I was sorry I had been rude, but should also make her understand that I considered I had a good deal of cause to feel injured.

'Clinton,' she began very quietly the moment she entered the room, 'I am glad you have come. There are some things I must say to you. I consider that the way in which you have behaved since our engagement has been most humiliating to me.'

'To you! I do not see what cause *you* have to speak,' I broke out.

'I am going to speak,' her soft, even voice went on. 'I consider your unreasonable jealousy as nothing short of an insult. If you cannot trust me, you had better bid me good-bye. There can be no happiness in a marriage without absolute trust.'

I hardly know what I said then, whether I pleaded or upbraided. I remember little of what befell till I found myself striding through the fields, their corn-flowers blue like those angry eyes, and their poppies bright like her scornful red mouth.

Was it all at an end, then, the dream of my life? Yes, of course it was—over, all over! I must get away, away back to the sea and the wild strange lands: away, somewhere, anywhere—from all this. But my poor old father! I could not leave him. I must not leave my work: some of my cases were in a critical condition. There was no escape. Here I must stay; meet her constantly; shake hands with her; and yet be as if the world stretched between us. And the dreadful part of it all was that she seemed not to care one little bit. She was the same bright, merry, dainty little creature that she had always been. Why was she so cruel? Why would she not once look at me with a glance of pity, love, remorse? How gladly, at her smallest overture of grace, would I have cast myself utterly on her mercy, and vowed anything she chose to demand of me. But she gave no sign; and I was too proud to approach her unless she herself seemed to summon me.

What a wretched time it was! How fiercely week by week did I try to harden my heart against her! But everything conspired to make that impossible. Hardly a cottage did I enter but I heard of her loving-kindness. She seemed to go about like a sunbeam, smoothing coarse pillows, comforting sad hearts, calling smiles to

parched and fevered lips, and looks of love to heavy eyes.

How was it that she, who could be so tender to others, could so hurt the heart that loved her? How *could* she keep up our quarrel all this time, when she must see how it was wounding me, killing me? If only she would say she was sorry she had vexed me, I should not whisper a word of blame. But say it she would not. And so the summer passed: autumn came with its storms and decay; and yet we were no nearer being friends again.

PART II.

Ye who have scorned each other,
Or injured friend or brother,
In this fast-fading year:
Ye who, by word or deed,
Have made a kind heart bleed,
Come gather here.

Let sinned against and sinning
Forget their strife's beginning,
And join in friendship now:
Be links no longer broken,
Be sweet forgiveness spoken
Under the holly bough.

So the wretched months passed till mid-winter was reached. And what a winter! Long before Christmas, the snow lay thick on the ground; and my poor patients learned full well the joys of a 'real old-fashioned winter.' I had enough and more than enough work to do; but I was thankful for it. Only in helping and relieving the sufferings of others could I succeed in forgetting my own pain. As the dull days dragged themselves along, one of my favourite patients began to fade away; and at length I had to face the painful task of telling her that, ere the new year came, she would have to enter on the world of the unknown. She was a decent woman, the wife of a dissipated husband, for whom she had toiled till her poor worn-out body could work no more. And now she lay apparently dying in her cold little room, thanking God each day that none of her children had been left to struggle on without her.

'Except my poor big child,' she said, with that spark of pathetic humour one sees now and again among our rustics—chiefly among the women. 'But I seem to have brought him up very badly, doctor. I must just hope he may be able to bring himself home at last.'

'Is there any one you would care to see, Mrs Clerk?' I asked her, late one bitter, cold afternoon.

'Why do you ask, doctor? Is the end at hand?'

'I can hardly say that. Yet, if there is any one I could send for to come to you, it might be as well not to put it off.'

A light gleamed over the tired, plain features. 'Oh doctor, if I *could* see the little Lady, I think it would make it easier for me.—But'—and the weary eyes wandered to the uncurtained window—it *is* getting dark, and the snow lays thick on the ground. Her couldn't come now. And she sighed that patient sigh that speaks of a life of renunciation.

'Have you no relation, no sister, you would care to see?' I asked.

'No, sir, no. I'd have liked to see the dear Lady this very night. I think if she had sung

me to sleep, I'd have woke better.—But it is no use. She couldn't come out, a night like this.'

'I'll fetch her in my sledge,' I said.

The tired eyes opened with such a glad light, that, had it been Queen Victoria I had promised to snatch off her throne and bring to this poor cottage, I should have had a try to fulfil my word.

'Will you, sir—oh, will you?'

'Yes.'

And away over the snow I dashed, nor paused to think till I drew up at the door of the Manor.

'Is Lady Avis in?' I asked the footman; and made my way unannounced to the drawing-room. The lamp was burning, subdued by its flower-like shade: the tea-table was drawn up near the fire; and she, in one of her soft, silken tea-gowns, was standing warming one perfectly shod little foot at the flame of the blazing logs which roared up the chimney and danced on the steel grate. Close to her sat a young fellow whom I had never seen. I learned afterwards that he was a cousin, who, during the years I had been away, had been like a brother to her; but I did not know this then.

Did her face grow pale in the red light as she saw me enter? It seemed so; yet she came quietly forward and offered me tea.

'No, thank you,' I said as shortly as I could; 'there is no time for tea. There is a woman dying who wants to see you.'

All her face grew soft in a moment. 'A woman dying! Oh, where? What woman?'

'Mrs Clerk, at the old Farm cottages. Will you come? The sledge is there. It will save time if you will come in it with me now.'

'I will come.'

'Nonsense, Avis,' cried the young man. 'It is sheer nonsense to think of going out in such an evening in an open sledge. The brougham can be brought round in twenty minutes.'

'Are the horses roughed?' I asked.

'No,' said Avis; 'and it would take a long time to get them ready. I will go with you.'

'And I shall wait outside, as I don't suppose the footman relishes holding the horses in the snow.'

'I have no doubt he has sent for a groom,' said Avis, her blue eyes turned coldly away. 'You had better drink some tea.—Harold, come with me for a moment;' and she swept from the room, the young man following. Drink tea in the room where that fellow had been! Never! I flung out of the room, and hastened into the night-air. A groom had relieved John Thomas at the horses' heads; and I had the gratification of observing the contemptuous looks with which he surveyed my scratch team and make-shift sledge.

A courteous footman in the hall asked whether I would not step into the library, and threw the door invitingly open, displaying the wainscoted room, on whose old oak carvings and brightly-bound volumes the firelight danced deliciously. Holly and mistletoe glistened and twinkled from all corners. It was Christmas eve.

'No, no; I will wait here,' I answered curtly.

At this moment, her light footstep sounded on the stair; and her ladyship herself tripped into

the lamplight. And what a ladyship! She had not even taken time to change her dainty shoes; but her silken dress was covered over with her great white mantle. On her soft fair curls rested a little white fur cap; and about her neck was bound a feathery boa like a glorified snow-flake. Her hands were hidden away in a snowy muff. Harold was with her.

'Well, my snow-queen,' he was saying, 'you will frighten the country folks if they meet you like that. You look as if you were playing at Queen Matilda escaping from Oxford Castle.'

'Clever boy,' laughed Avis, 'to remember his history so well.'

'Meantime, history is repeating itself in the most commonplace fashion in Mrs Clerk's cottage,' I remarked grimly. 'Perhaps you had better not come. You look too gorgeous for that poor room.'

'Am I? I never thought. This was the warmest, so I put it on,' she began, her great eyes full of distress.

'It's all right, dear,' cried Harold; 'you know they love you when you look beautiful.'

'They must always love her, then,' I thought within my bitter heart.

In another moment I was seated beside her; the horses' heads were let go; the bells jangled out; and the sledge slid over the snow. It was a glorious night. Above us stretched the sapphire sky, gemmed with myriads of flashing stars; while all around us was silence and the gleaming snow. All the well-known landscape was rendered strange and unfamiliar under its pure covering—as a dear dead face is rendered awesome under the thin sheet we spread after death.

The bells jangled; the horses' hoofs clinked against each other now and again as the sledge sped on; but all else was silent. Not a word did we speak. I caught a glimpse of her face once as she turned it to watch a great white owl slowly gliding over our heads. How white and still the beautiful face was! Was there a tremble about the mouth?

On we sped. When we had started, my heart had been ablaze with hot anger. Who was this youth who had usurped my place? Why had I been cast out of my place? Why had we quarrelled? Why had we not made it up again? It was all her fault—all. I had been ready to make friends, yearning for the old companionship, breaking my heart for her cruel sake; and she had never cared in the least. Cared! She had been filling up her time and thoughts with this young Herbert—Harold—whatever his name might be, and probably a dozen more. She was a mere flirt. In her heart she still despised me for being a doctor—'Only a sawbones,' as she used to say. She was the daughter of the lord of the Manor: I—well, I was as good as she. I was a man with a man's heart, head, hands. She had no right to play with me. Had she played with me?

At that moment I caught the pure profile against the lamplight. She had leaned suddenly forward, and was gazing ahead with a strange, far-away look in her eyes. She worthless! She a flirt! How pure and cold she looked! pure like the snow; yes, and cold like the snow. Ah no, not cold. With those deep dark eyes, those sensitive nostrils, that exquisite mouth. And

yet why not? It is ever the most beautiful women who are most cruel.

And so went on the foolish, proud, unreasoning thoughts within my brain, while my heart grew warmer in its love for her at every stride the horses took. How could I help loving her with her dear presence so near me, her garments touching me, her breath rising like incense to heaven through the clear air?

Oh, what a long drive! What a sad sore heart! I felt as if I could bear it no longer—when the welcome cottage came in sight. Silently we drove up to the door.

'If you will go in, I will drive on, and leave some medicine for another patient, and come back for you,' I said, breaking the silence for the first time.

Without a word, she left me.

I drove on about a mile farther, and then returned slowly through the still night. Mrs Clerk's dwelling had once been a fine old farmhouse in the days when farmers were opulent and liked their homes to be roomy. It had 'come down' in the world, however; and was now divided off among several families of labourers. But outwardly it was still beautiful to the eye. From where I sat alone in the sledge, I looked through an archway of dark yews towards the old rambling building with its low eaves and mullioned windows. The steep tiled roof was covered with the gleaming snow; the tall irregular chimney stacks rose black against the deep-blue sky; and from one uncurtained window, the ruddy light shone out upon the snow-clad lawn. How still it was! Was the whole world dead? The bells on the horses' heads sounded painfully loud as the animals moved restlessly from time to time. I felt vaguely that I ought to walk them up and down; but the spirit of stillness seemed to have got the better of all my senses. I could not move. Above was the still, silent sky: around, the still, silent world; and in my heart a strange sensation of unfeelingness. The world was dead. I was dead; everything was dead. Nothing mattered any more. I felt nothing, nothing. Why trouble whether she loved me or no? It would all be the same when I was dead. My heart was dead now. The spirit of stillness had wrapped the world in its cold embrace, and my soul was at rest within its arms. I did not mind the delay; I did not feel impatient for her return; only, I wished the horses would stand still and the bells not jangle so.

Then, all at once, through the silence stole a beautiful sound, falling like golden snow from somewhere above me. A woman's voice! Singing softly, tenderly, gloriously! I held my breath to listen. No words reached me—only the sweet clear notes; and even they seemed to come from the voice of a singer in a dream. The voice ceased. A little wind uprose and swayed the trees, as if protesting against the cessation of the wonderful music—then suddenly there came to me over the snow the sound of bells.

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other through the mist.

Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
Peace and good-will to all mankind.

The door opened gently—closed; and, to the music of the bells, a white figure moved towards me through the whiteness. Under the arch of black yews she stepped. Did she do it on purpose? Did she know that the light of the carriage lamp fell full upon her? Did she dream how beautiful she was with the spirit of her song still on her lips; with the light of her tender action still in her eyes? She stopped and listened. How sweetly, ghostly, sounded those far-off bells, those strange dream-bells. Not a sound, but their thin beauty dying and growing and dying again! And there she stood and listened 'with the wonder growing in her face.'

'Peace and good-will—peace;' and then she looked at me, and came quickly forward—next moment she was beside me in the sledge.

'She is asleep,' she whispered. 'I think she will get well.'

'Then let us get home,' I answered; and that was all.

Jangle, jangle, jangle went the sleigh bells; and once more we moved through the silent world. But we went slowly now. Why? Was it because of the surrounding stillness, which one feared to disturb? Or was it because my whole soul was filled and thrilled with the knowledge of her nearness, with the knowledge that here were she and I alone in this sleeping—this dead world: the only living creatures in this great silence?

Slower and slower went the horses; and yet the road seemed to melt before us; and ever nearer came 'home' and parting. But yet we did not speak. The sweet precious moments slipped by; and once more my heart came alive and beat and throbbed and suffered. I longed to throw myself down in the snow before her and humble myself utterly, if only, by my doing so, we might be again as once we had been. But still I could not do it. She had been wrong too. She *must* meet me half-way. Oh! she *must* feel it. Why would she not confess it? Could she not see how much braver, nobler, worthier of herself it would be than this indifferent unconcern, this obstinate silence?

'I've dropped my muff,' the clear voice suddenly said quietly.

I started as if I had been shot, and came back from my world of thought to gaze with uncomprehending eyes on the sweet face at my side. How sweet it was, how calm, how contented! Why was it not full of shame and contrition? It ought to have been; but no, not a bit of it! The blue eyes were looking up at me with the utmost friendliness; the rosy mouth had a smile on it.

'Please,' she cried—'please, stop the horses. I've dropped my muff.'

I stopped the horses.

'Will you please get out and find it for me?' went on the purring voice. 'I will hold the horses.'

'I may not be able to find it in the dark,' said I. 'It is white like the snow.'

'It's whiter,' she answered, still smiling.

I got out, and strode along the way that we had come. My heart was vexed within me; for I knew she had dropped that wretched muff on purpose that she might order me to go back and fetch it.

At that moment my foot touched something soft. The little white muff! I picked it up; and something dropped out. I stooped and lifted it from the snow. A glove! Such a little glove! Not thinking what I did, I spread it out on my broad palm and laughed a bitter laugh as words that I had read somewhere came to my mind, 'That hand withal looketh somewhat soft and small for so large a will in sooth.'

I walked back to the sledge. The lamps were shining with two golden eyes over the snow: the horses' bells were jangling; but the little white lady was sitting very still. I came to her side of the carriage. What a great fellow I seemed! for, standing there on the road, my head was on a level with hers as she sat in the sledge.

I held out the muff. She did not take it. Her face was turned away. Was she crying? Was that why she kept her face hidden? Was she ashamed at last? This was well, ah! this was well. I was glad she had come to see the error of her ways. She had taken a long time about it, certainly; but still I would be generous; I would pardon her at once.

I still held the muff out. 'Avis, this is your property.'

'Which?' and a face, not bathed in tears, not blushing with shame, but sparkling and dimpling with laughter, was turned to mine. 'Which?' she repeated, looking at me with a world of mischief shining in her eyes.

'This,' I said severely—but my hand shook.

'Oh! is that all?' she said, taking the white fluffy thing in one hand very slowly and looking in my eyes all the time; while gradually a warm little bare hand stole out from under the wraps. 'I thought you meant *this*'—and the warm little hand was about my neck.

For one wild moment I tried to remember my anger; but the shining eyes were still smiling into mine; and next moment the laughing mouth was warm on my lips.

Ah! well, who could have resisted it? In an instant my arms were about her, and I was straining her to my heart.

How could two young people who loved each other have been so foolish?

A FEN PARISH.

FOUR miles north of Spalding, which its good folk are pleased to dub the 'Metropolis of the Fens,' lies the village of Surfleet, Lincolnshire. Close by the parish church, which stands beside the main highway from Spalding to Boston, flows the river Glen, the principal affluent of the Welland, which it meets two and a half miles to the east of the village. Below the confluence, the sluggish Welland used formerly to find its way to the Wash through wide marshes, that at seasons of high tide were covered with the in-flowing sea.

Two hundred years ago the inhabitants of this parish elected every Easter, in addition to the churchwardens, overseers of the poor, surveyors of highways, and constables, the usual parish officers everywhere, also an ale-taster, a swine-

ringer, a pinder and field-tenter, a marsh shepherd, a marsh reeve, and two dike reeves. The ale-taster—called also ale-conner—was appointed to assay or test the strength and quality of the beer brewed by the brewers. If it was below the standard, he ordered it to be sold at a price lower than that fixed by law for good beer. The duties of the swine-ringer were to see that the owners of swine 'ringed' them properly—that is, put an iron nail into their noses, to prevent them from rooting up the turf. At that period, large herds of swine seem to have been kept, chiefly on the open common-land of the parish. The roads, too, were wide, and had broad grassy margins. The pigs, therefore, if not ringed, would have done damage to the turf by ploughing it up with their snouts. The Court of the Duchy of Lancaster, which had jurisdiction over the fens or part of them, issued a special code of laws or orders to regulate the use of common right and pasturage. One of these orders was to the effect that 'No swine were to be put in the Fens unringed.' The churchwardens' account-book shows the great amount of damage that swine sometimes did to the roads in the following entry in the year 1771: 'To two days filling in the swine rootings and cleaning the roads in several places, three shillings.'

The pinder had charge of the pound or pinfold, into which all cattle, sheep, horses, or swine that were found straying on the roads were put, and detained until claimed and ransomed by their owners. In 1697 this official was empowered to charge 'for every horse, twopence; for every beast, twopence; for every swine, fourpence, for every time that they shall trespass in the open fields of Surfleet; and for every score of sheep, fourpence.' Thus every pig was accounted as troublesome as two horses or two beasts, or even twenty sheep.

The marsh shepherd was elected by the inhabitants—that is, the farmers and owners of stock—to take charge of their sheep that were sent to be grazed on the Welland marshes. He was paid for his trouble all through the eighteenth century at the rate of four shillings a score for sheep, and one penny a piece for lambs, for the year.

To the marsh reeve was entrusted the important duty of maintaining the sea-banks, and keeping watch upon them in times of high tide or heavy rains, when the inland streams and channels were swollen with water. The office was of course one of great responsibility. The bed of the river (Welland), and the beds of the drainage water-courses that emptied into it, were in many cases higher than the level of the adjoining lands; and their waters were only kept in by high grassy banks. Consequently, any neglect of these banks exposed the entire district to inundation. In 1777 the marshes were enclosed, and about the same time the river was deepened and its channel improved; since then, the marsh reeve has acted as factor, or steward,

or bailiff for the inhabitants of the parish in respect of that portion of the marshes which was assigned to them in common ownership.

The dike reeve—in the Fens the ditches are called 'dykes' or 'dikes'—were, and are, officers appointed to inspect the parish drains, sewers, and dykes connected with the artificial drainage-works of the district. They were charged to keep them free from weeds and reeds, to preserve their sides or banks in good order, to maintain the efficiency of the tunnels and bridges and sluices, and let in the water from the rivers, or shut it out, according as occasion might require. Every year, between the 1st of September and the following 25th of March, they 'rode the sewers' and larger ditches or drains—a duty which engaged one man for eight days. This was for the purpose of inspecting them preparatory to presenting their annual Report before the nearest Court of Sewers at Boston. The dike reeves were allowed five shillings each for every day spent in 'riding the sewers.'

The account-books of the parish are full of entries for matters peculiar to a Fen parish, such as payments for cleaning out dykes; heightening and repairing river-banks; watching the water night and day in times of flood; maintaining banks, bridges, tunnels; opening the outfalls of drains and other water-courses choked up with mud; 'cradging' banks—that is, heightening and backing them temporarily with clay, to prevent the water running over them or percolating through them—and such-like things, as well as for purchasing timber, thorns, bricks and stones for making and repairing these various drainage-works.

On these wide marshes travellers were sometimes belated and drowned; nor were the natives themselves exempt from fatal disasters on them. The seamen, shepherds, wild-duck hunters, fishermen, fowlers, and others whose callings took them on those lonely expanses, were occasionally overtaken by the waters and lost. Whether the following entries in the parish registers refer to cases of this nature is not stated; it is probable that they were: '1733 February 16, Wm. Foresigh, a Scotchman of the parish of Middleby, in the county of Annandale, buried; and '1729, April 18, Dunkin Camoll, Passenger, of Stirling-bridge, in Scotland, buried. These entries were evidently made by one who was no great adept at spelling, and spelt phonetically; the names are presumably 'Wm. Forsyth' and 'Duncan Campbell.' Another parish functionary there was who should be named—a dog-whipper, to whip the dogs out of the churchyard; he was in receipt of an annual salary of twenty-one shillings for performing the no doubt onerous duties of his office. The payment, though not the name, was continued until past the middle of the present century.

Here are some 'curiosities' from the records of the parish. A payment of one shilling to this or the other person for 'killing an otter,' and the same sum for 'killing a fox,' are frequent items between 1753 and 1780. Under Christmas Day, 1760, stands, 'Paid for a foxes foot, one shilling.' Under 1759, 'For carrying the Command^o to Donington, four shillings; and 'For the Command^o coming home, four shillings.' Not that Donington, a town six miles distant, was above

all its neighbours godless and wicked, and Surfleet especially holy; the reference is no doubt to some painted or printed copy of the Ten Commandments, such as frequently hang on church walls, which was sent to Donington to be repainted or mended.

The following entries seem to indicate that the inhabitants of Surfleet were certainly not holy above their fellows, but, on the contrary, lawless, fond of wanton mischief, and given to rough practical joking: '1762, April 11th. Spent sixpence upon Jno. Perkins for helping me to set a boy in y^e stocks;' several items for locks for the churchyard gates and the various doors of the church; for new gates on more than one occasion; a reward 'for getting back the churchyard gates;' 'for pulling the churchyard stones out of the river [Glen], sixpence;' and 'the constables to be allowed one guinea for putting a stop to the nuisances on a Sunday by boys and men playing at marbles and chuck, and people getting drunk on the Sabbath, or any other disorderly conduct' (March 25th, 1828). 'Ale for washing the church when cleaned one shilling' reads very funnily; the ale was of course wanted not for washing the church, but for washing the throats of those who washed the church.

During the first half of the present century sparrows seem to have been a plague in Surfleet; at a vestry meeting held on the 26th of March 1840, the surveyors of the highways were empowered to purchase them at the rate of one penny per dozen eggs, twopence for young birds, and fourpence for old birds; and at a still earlier date the contractor for the poor in the poorhouse was expressly relieved of the expense of destroying them. April 7th 1801. 'At this meeting [of the vestry] the question was put whether the ringing days shall be continued, the ringers [who received 10s. 6d. to 12s. 6d. a day] not doing their duty. The voices were as follows: ayes, 6; noes, 13.' The churches of the Fens are noted for their fine rings of bells.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE United States Consul at Nassau has recently reported in a very interesting manner upon the sponge-trade of the Bahama Islands, an industry which employs between five and six thousand persons, the majority of whom are blacks. The sponges are dragged from their beds by means of long poles, to which are attached iron hooks, after their locality has been ascertained by means of a water-glass. This contrivance consists simply of a wooden box about nine inches square with a plate-glass bottom. When floated on the water, this apparatus will enable a person looking into it to see plainly objects at the bottom of the sea, even though they be three or four fathoms distant. An attempt, some years ago, to do away with this primitive system of obtaining sponges by the introduction of dredges was frustrated, for it was feared that the new method would have the effect of extirpating the sponges. It is not known exactly how long a sponge takes in growing to a marketable size, and there are many

contradictory opinions on the subject; but it appears that from twelve to eighteen months is approximately correct.

A new form of wood-paving is now being put on its trial in the streets of Paris. Oak-blocks four inches in depth are split up as if they were intended for firewood, and are laid loosely on end upon a foundation of sand. Sand is then thrown over them, so that all crevices are filled up, and a layer of finer sand is covered over all. The roadway thus made is alternately beaten and watered, the moisture causing the wood to swell, and so compressing the materials into a homogeneous mass. It is claimed for this description of paving that it will last a long time, and will sustain the heaviest traffic without giving way.

Some experiments have lately been reported as having taken place in France with the object of determining the effect of electricity upon the growth of plants. The apparatus used was simple enough, for it consisted only of a zinc plate and a copper plate placed one at each end of a seedbed and connected above by a copper wire. A row of hemp grown in the electrified seedbed produced stalks which were forty-three inches longer than those of plants growing under normal conditions. Potatoes nearly doubled their output of tubers under the influence of the current, while tomatoes were made to ripen eight days earlier than those to which no electricity was applied. These results, if correctly reported, are very extraordinary, but confirmation is needed.

It is a matter of common knowledge that during the initial stage of a fire a very small quantity of water is sufficient to extinguish it, hence it has become usual to place in buildings various forms of extinguishing apparatus, from the humble bucket to the elaborate chemical contrivance charged with carbonic acid. But in the case of the buckets it is too often found at the critical moment that they have become half empty by evaporation. A noteworthy improvement in such apparatus is exhibited in Messer & Thorpe's Patent Bucket and Fire-extinguisher. The peculiar feature of this invention is that the buckets are kept in a kind of square tank, which may be made ornamental if desired, and that they telescope one inside the other to the number of twenty or more, and are always full of water; that is to say, the tank is of such a size that it holds a little more water than the capacity of the twenty buckets. These fit one inside the other; and at an alarm of fire, the lid of the tank would be opened, and the buckets taken out one by one, each being quite full of the liquid. Apart from the efficiency of this system, it is a great advantage that the buckets should be hidden away in the manner described. The invention was shown at the recent Naval Exhibition, and attracted much attention.

Another invention of quite a different kind was shown at the same Exhibition during the last few weeks that it was open; this is Kelway's

Marine and General Electrical Signalling Apparatus. This contrivance consists of a frame or shallow box which can conveniently be about six feet high by four feet in breadth. It contains fifty incandescent electric lamps, connected in such a manner that part of them can be illuminated at the will of the operator. Upon a small keyboard arrangement is provided a button for each letter of the alphabet, and on pressure of the particular button denoting the letter, certain lamps in the box forming that letter are illuminated. In this way luminous signals which any one can understand can be rapidly spelt out. Such a box can be affixed to the rigging of a ship or against any building on shore, or in any other situation desired. The apparatus acts perfectly; and the letters being six feet in height, can be read from a very great distance. The electric lamp has now become so common that there would be no difficulty in any large town, or indeed on shipboard, in finding the necessary current to furnish the energy for this excellent method of signalling. It is evident that the letters can be made to spell words direct, or any form of private code could be used.

A correspondent of *Nature* describes a method for the destruction of mosquitoes which we believe is not commonly known; and he tells us of an English resident on the Riviera who had freed his property from this pest. Fresh water on the Riviera, as many of our readers well know, is scarce, and therefore it is treasured accordingly. The inhabitants store it for use in tanks and other receptacles. Now, the larvæ of the mosquito, it is asserted, can live only in fresh water, and the carp happens to be a fish which is particularly fond of that larvæ as an article of diet. The gentleman referred to exterminated the insects by the simple device of placing a pair of carp in each tank attached to his premises. We feel certain that there are many places abroad where the conditions are similar and where this experiment might be tried with advantage.

A new method of brickmaking has been invented by Mr Kennedy of the United States, and a company has been formed to work the patent in this country. The brickmaking machine was recently shown at Southall, and proved in a conclusive manner the efficient nature of the process. The most noteworthy feature in this mechanical brickmaker is that the clay is used perfectly dry. After being reduced to powder in a disintegrator, it is strained through a sieve, and then falls into the hopper of the machine, the coarse particles being returned to the disintegrator to be reduced once more. From the hopper the powdered clay is fed into moulds, which are four in number, and a pressure of one hundred and sixty tons is then brought to bear upon each. This is equal to about one ton per square inch, and this great pressure is secured by compound levers of the first order. When the bricks so made leave the moulds they are very hard and compact, and they are at once taken away to the kiln to be fired. The machine is strictly automatic, self-feeding and self-discharging, and the work being done under shelter, can go on all the year round without interruption. The machine in question has an output of twenty thousand bricks per day of ten hours.

Long before the gelatine dry plate had fur-

nished photographers with a means of taking so-called instantaneous pictures, a collodion dry plate had been employed, and although its qualities were good, it possessed the demerit of extreme slowness, and so its use was discarded. Two years ago, at the Birmingham Photographic Convention, Dr Hill-Norris announced that he had succeeded in producing a collodion dry plate which rivalled gelatine in rapidity; and he promised at that time that the new plates should be presently placed upon the market. We now learn that this promise is to be fulfilled in a very few weeks, and photographers are looking forward to the revival of an old process which had several advantages, and which may possibly prove a formidable rival to the more modern form of photographic dry plate.

The English sparrow is regarded in certain transatlantic towns in much the same way as the English rabbit is looked upon in Australia and New Zealand. In other words, he has been so prolific that he has become a nuisance; and many sufferers have endeavoured to invent the best means of destroying him. In one of the American papers it is advocated that the sparrows should be exterminated by the administration of poisoned food; and the method recommended is to soak grain in strongly sweetened water and then to sprinkle dry arsenic upon it. But the sparrow is such a cunning bird that he must be tempted for a few days to the food by spreading unadulterated grain in a certain locality, to which he will gradually become accustomed. This grain can afterwards be replaced with the poisoned variety to the discomfiture of the poor birds.

It has often been complained that the use of modern explosives in mines leads to the production of such poisonous fumes that a grave danger to the workmen is thus incurred. A short time ago a Committee was appointed by the Durham Coal-owners' Association, consisting of representatives of both masters and men, to consider this important question. Careful experiments having been made, the Committee came to the conclusion that the fumes produced are not more dangerous than those from gunpowder; that carbon monoxide—the irrespirable gas which is produced by the combustion of charcoal, and which has led to so many deaths—is present only in traces; that an interval of five minutes should be allowed to elapse before the men re-enter the gallery in which the charge has been fired; and that as they find a portion of the deleterious gases are due to the fuse employed, the charges should be invariably fired by electricity.

Telegraphic wires in China are invariably placed under ground, and the reason why the familiar poles and aerial wires to which we are so accustomed in this country are not adopted in the land of the rising sun is a curious one. There are no cemeteries or burial-grounds in China, each family providing for the sepulture of the dead upon its own premises. Dead ancestors are held in such peculiar reverence among the Celestials, that a shadow cast upon the grave of such is looked upon as an insult that must on no account be passed over. It was found that when the first Telegraph Company began to put up poles on which to hang their wires, that the shadows of these poles were sure at some time of the day to fall upon the grave of somebody's

ancestor, and there were constant disputes between the workmen and the inhabitants. The men, in fact, could not get on with their work; and being unfamiliar with the Chinese language, were unable to understand what the uproar meant which their work occasioned. The Government was then appealed to, and the secret came out; thenceforward, for their own protection, the company were forced to lay their wires below ground.

The *Papermaker* reminds its readers that in the International Exhibition of 1891 a specimen of iron paper was shown. This led to some competition among iron-masters as to the thinness to which cold iron could be rolled. One maker produced a sheet of paper so thin that eighteen hundred layers of it piled upon one another measured only one inch in thickness. The fineness of the iron-foil referred to may be understood when it is remembered that twelve hundred sheets of the thinnest tissue-paper arranged in the same manner measure a fraction more than one inch in thickness. The iron paper was perfectly smooth and easy to write upon; but when held up to the light, it was porous. We are not aware of any practical use to which iron paper could be put, for, owing to its liability to rust, it would be far inferior to the paper that we are accustomed to.

Oranges, figs, olives, and grapes are now freely grown in Australia, and find their way to most European countries. It is reported that a Greek gardener has expressed the opinion that the colonial fruit is inferior in quality to that grown at Smyrna and Athens. This report having been brought to the notice of the Department of Agriculture at New South Wales, the British consuls at Naples and Marseilles were appealed to for a consignment of the best varieties of grapes, figs, and olives grown in Italy and France; and when the cuttings arrive in Australia, experiments are to be carried out at the various stations throughout the colony with a view to produce the finest possible varieties of the respective fruits.

It is often desirable to relieve the tedium of travelling by rail by testing the speed at which the train is running along, and many persons amuse themselves by timing this speed by noting, watch in hand, the time at which the various mile-posts are passed. There is a rule, however, which gives approximately correct results, which any one may practise without reference to a time-keeper. The rails average about thirty feet in length; and the number passed over in twenty seconds equals, roughly, the number of miles per hour at which the train is travelling. Unless the train is running at a very high speed, say over sixty miles per hour, there is no difficulty in counting the number of rails passed over, as there is a distinct click as the joint between each pair of rails is covered by the wheel.

A great deal of misconception exists with regard to the actual speed at which a modern locomotive engine can travel, and wild statements have lately been made as to the wonderful pace at which posterity will glide along the rails. Mr Stretton, C.E., speaking at Leicester recently, gave a statement of the highest speeds yet attained, and places the limit at eighty miles per hour. At this speed, he tells us, the resistance of the air and the back-pressure in the cylinders become so

great that they absorb the whole power of the engine. It is then useless to attempt to still further open the regulator and try to go faster, as the back-pressure instantly increases, as the exhaust steam cannot be got out of the cylinders fast enough.

Mr Maxim, whose name is well known in connection with the machine gun which bears his name, is now engaged upon the construction of a novel flying-machine, the completion of which must be looked forward to with great interest. This flying-machine, or ship, will measure about eighty feet long by thirty feet in breadth, and is mostly made of extremely thin but strong steel plates. The motive-power will be steam generated by some hydro-carbon such as petroleum. The machine will differ from all others previously devised in dispensing altogether with the balloon principle; in fact, it will resemble more than anything else a huge kite. Whether it will succeed is an open question, about which many doubts must exist; but there is no doubt that its inventor believes in it and will carry it to completion.

We have constantly to record the utilisation of waste products, and it is always an agreeable task to do so, because it is evident that such utilisation means a distinct gain to the wealth of the country. The last invention of the kind must be credited to Mr W. L. Brookway, who has pointed out a way to save the waste tin plate from the cans, cases, and other receptacles for preserved foods which now find their way into every household. The tins are first heated in a special form of furnace, and it is stated that in about three or four minutes the tin and solder are completely separated from the iron which forms the base of the so-called tin plate, and falls to the bottom of the furnace. The iron itself is left in such a condition that, after cleaning, cold-rolling, and annealing, it makes a tough high-class iron plate, which is fit for a number of different applications. It need hardly be said that the separated tin and solder are not the least valuable of the metals saved.

We have heard a great deal recently about so-called hypnotism, and as it is a subject upon which the general public seem extremely ignorant, and one which has led very often to mischievous results, we think it as well to quote the opinion of Dr Calderwood, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh. Lecturing a short time ago on the subject of Hypnotism, he said it was merely a new name for mesmerism. With regard to the method of producing the artificially induced sleep, he stated that there was nothing in the nature of electricity or magnetism about it, and, contrary to the general belief, no influence whatever emanated from the body of the operator. The results are really brought about by the tiring of a single line of nerve, and he believed that many people, if not all, were liable to it, but not against their will. The condition during the sleep was akin to the cataleptic state, or the state of the sleep-walker, and he warned his audience against having anything to do with it.

An investigation into the condition of animal life in the depths of the Black Sea has led to a curious discovery. Experiments in this direction have been going on for the past two years, and an interesting Report is now being prepared by the scientists who have been engaged in the work.

From this it appears that from one end to the other of the Sea, the water below a certain depth is impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen, and in consequence of this no animal life is found below that depth. A satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon has as yet not been found.

A well-known bee-master of the Gironde, Mr Teynac, has conceived the idea of utilising the interesting insects under his care in an altogether novel manner. He has found that they show the same instinct which is exhibited by the carrier-pigeon in returning to their hives from long distances. A bee-line has become an expression which is understood to mean a straight course from one place to another, the little insect flying in this direct manner to its home. Mr Teynac's plan is to attract the wandering bee by means of a saucer of sugar or honey; to take it between a pair of tweezers, and to affix to its thorax a small ticket by means of fish-glue. This ticket might bear microscopic writing, or might indeed consist of a photo-micrograph such as was commonly used during the siege of Paris for conveyance of news by pigeon post. It is not pretended that the bees will cover the immense distances which

the birds are known to travel; indeed, their flight must be limited to perhaps three or four miles. Still, the system might be found useful in the absence of the feathered messengers.

SONNET TO THE NEW YEAR.

For ever doth our Mother Earth repeat
Her happy welcome to the young New Year,
Unstained as yet by human sigh or tear.
What marvel his bright presence doth she greet,
And pours her winter treasures at his feet.
On naked branch her frost-gems sparkle clear;
Her snow-wreaths hide the leaves decayed and sere.
All must be beautiful his step to meet,
Who brings again the glory of her youth.
The saddest heart forbears awhile to grieve,
As o'er its threshold steps the fair New Year.
'What gift?' it cries. 'Now answer me in truth.'
The New Year whispers: 'Nay, thy questioning
leave;

My gifts are all from God—then wherefore fear?'

MARY GORGES.

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